

REMARKS

Entry of the amendments indicated above is respectfully requested. Claims 6-8 were previously canceled. Claims 1-5 and 9-26 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 2, 9, 4, 5, 14, 20 and 22-26 have been amended. Applicant asserts that all amendments are fully supported in the application as filed and no new matter is added. Furthermore, Applicant respectfully asserts that the amendments to the claims are, for example, combinations of limitations that were previously presented in the claims, as well as various clarifying recitations. Accordingly, Applicant asserts that the Examiner has already diligently and adequately searched the relevant subject matter, whereby no additional searching is required for the examination of the claims in their current form(s). Favorable reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully requested in light of the foregoing amendments and the remarks that follow.

1. Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-5 and 9-26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. patent 6,968,591 ("Tanaka I"), in view of U.S. patent 6,506,472 ("Tanaka II"). Reconsideration of claims 1-5 and 9-26 is respectfully requested.

Independent claim 1 has been amended to require a holding sheet bonded to the non-woven sheet to provide a space for receiving an insertion part of a holding member. Support for the amendments may be found FIG. 8 and paragraphs [0100], [0121] and [0133], for example. Claim 1 has been further amended to require a "plurality of spot-form joining parts formed intermittently along a spot-form line" wherein "the central joining part and the spot-form line are positioned along respective edges of the space for receiving an insertion part." Support for the amendments may be found FIG. 8, for example.

Neither of the Tanaka references discloses the positioning of the central joining part and spot-form line as now claimed in claim 1. Tanaka I discloses "join lines 9" that are positioned on the strips of the base sheet rather than along the edges of the "holding space 20." See Tanaka I, Fig. 1.

Moreover, Tanaka I in fact teaches away from such positioning. As shown in Fig. 2 of Tanaka I, the fiber bundle 3 is bonded to the base sheet 2 along continuous bond lines 8 that correspond with the outer edges of the holding spaces 20. Thus, Tanaka I

teaches securing *all* of the fibers in the fiber bundle near the edges of the holding space, i.e., by using a continuous bonding line, as opposed to securing only *some* of the fibers, i.e., by using a spot-form line.

Tanaka II does not cure the deficiencies of Tanaka I. Specifically, Tanaka II does not even disclose a holding space, let alone a spot-form line positioned along an edge of a holding space. Thus, for at least these reasons, allowance of claim 1 is respectfully requested.

Claim 2 has been amended to require that some of the plurality of the spot-form joining parts are formed along a second spot-form line that is positioned along an edge of a second space. As discussed above with respect to claim 1, Tanaka I does not disclose a spot-form line positioned along the edge of a holding space, let alone two such spot-form lines. Therefore, for at least this reason and for the reasons stated above with respect to claim 1, allowance of claim 2 is respectfully requested. Support for the amendment may be found FIG. 8, for example.

Claims 3 and 4 depend from claim 1 and should be allowed for the reasons stated above with respect to claim 1.

Claim 5, which depends from claim 1, has been amended to include dimensions with respect to the length of the spot-form joining parts and the distance between consecutive spot-form joining parts. Support for the amendments may be found in paragraph [0063], for example. Neither Tanaka I nor Tanaka II discloses the claimed dimensions. Thus, for at least these reasons and for the reasons stated above with respect to claim 1, allowance of claim 5 is respectfully requested.

Claim 9, which depends from claim 1, has been amended in view of the amendments to claim 1 that include the limitation of a holding sheet. Claim 10 depends from claim 9. Claims 9 and 10 should be allowed for at least the reasons stated above with respect to claim 1.

Claim 11, which depends from claim 1, has been amended in view of the amendments to claim 1 that include the limitation of a holding sheet. Claims 12 and 13 depend from claim 11. Claims 11, 12 and 13 should be allowed for at least the reasons stated above with respect to claim 1.

Independent claim 14 has been amended to require a sheet having a “plurality of cuts” wherein “the spot-forming joining parts are located on a portion of the non-woven sheet that does not have the plurality of cuts.” Support for the amendment may be found FIG. 8 and paragraph [0101], for example. As discussed above, Tanaka I discloses “join lines 9” that are located on the strips. Moreover, Tanaka I teaches away from claim 14 as amended because it discloses using only continuous bonding lines 8 and central bonding line 2 to attach the fiber bundle 3 to the non-strip portion of the base sheet 2. Tanaka II, which does not even disclose a sheet with a plurality of cuts, does not cure the deficiencies of Tanaka I. Thus, for at least these reasons, allowance of claim 14 is respectfully requested.

Claims 15-19 all depend from claim 14 and should be allowed for at least the same reasons discussed above with respect to claim 14.

Claim 20 has been amended to require steps of bonding a holding sheet to the non-woven sheet and “arranging the spot-form joining parts along a line that corresponds with an edge of the space.” Support for the amendment may be found FIG. 8 and paragraph [0105], for example. As discussed above, Tanaka I does not disclose and in fact teaches away from the claimed positioning of the spot-form joining parts. Accordingly, Tanaka I does not disclose the step of arranging the spot-form parts in such a manner. Therefore, for at least these reasons, allowance of claim 20 as amended is respectfully requested.

Claim 21 depends from claim 20 and should be allowed for at least the same reasons stated above with respect to claim 20.

Claims 22 and 23 depend from claim 20 and have been amended in view of the amendment to claim 20 regarding the step of bonding a holding sheet to the non-woven sheet. Claims 22 and 23 should be allowed for at least the same reasons stated above with respect to claim 20.

Claim 24, which depends from claim 1, has been amended to include dimensions with respect to the length of the spot-form joining parts and the distance between consecutive spot-form joining parts. Support for the amendments may be found in paragraph [0063], for example. Neither Tanaka I nor Tanaka II discloses the claimed

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dimensions. Thus, for at least these reasons and for the reasons stated above with respect to claim 1, allowance of claim 24 is respectfully requested.

Claim 25 has been amended to depend from claim 15 and to include the limitation wherein the spot-form joining parts are oriented in a line that is positioned between the central joining part and the portion of the non-woven sheet having the plurality of cuts. Support for the amendments may be found in FIG. 8, for example. Neither Tanaka I nor Tanaka II discloses this positioning, and allowance of claim 25 is respectfully requested for at least these reasons and for the reasons stated above with respect to claim 14.

Independent claim 26 has been amended to include limitations similar to those now included in claim 1. Support for the amendments may be found in FIG. 8, for example. Thus, claim 26 should be allowed for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 1.

CONCLUSION

It is submitted that claims 1-5 and 9-26 are in compliance with 35 U.S.C. §§112, 102 and 103 and each defines patentable subject matter. No new matter has been added. A Notice of Allowance is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

H. JAY SPIEGEL & ASSOCIATES



Attorney for Applicant
H. Jay Spiegel
Reg. No. 30,722

H. JAY SPIEGEL & ASSOCIATES
P.O. Box 11
Mount Vernon, VA 22121
(703) 619-0101 – Phone
(703) 619-0110 – Facsimile
jayspiegel@aol.com – e-mail